

REDACTED VERSION
PURSUANT TO 35-A M.R.S.A. § 704(5)

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2000-475

June 20, 2000

Appeal of Consumer Assistance
Division Decision #2000-8228
Regarding Bangor Hydro-Electric
Company

ORDER ON APPEAL

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT, and DIAMOND, Commissioners

I. Summary

In this Order we uphold the May 19, 2000 decision of the Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) regarding **[customer's]** dispute with Bangor Hydro-Electric (BHE) and we decline to change the customer's present payment arrangement.

II. Background

The CAD established a payment arrangement for **[customer]** on September 8, 1999 for a 20-month period. The arrangement required **[customer]** to pay \$100 monthly plus current charges. Her account balance at the start of the payment arrangement was \$1,927.28. **[Customer]** made a few initial payments on schedule, but her payments have since been irregular and have failed to meet the total amount due every month. At the time of her most recent payment in February, 2000, she was behind in the payment arrangement by \$470. As of April 21, 2000, her total account balance had grown to \$2,287.22.

CAD has renegotiated payment arrangements for **[customer]** in the past based on changes in her financial situation. **[Customer]** is ineligible for another renegotiated arrangement at this time because she has not experienced a demonstrable deterioration in her finances. The CAD specialist informed **[customer]** that she may qualify for financial assistance and referred her to the available agencies.

BHE has offered to reinstate the broken payment arrangement if **[customer]** pays \$1,000 as catch up on her account balance. CAD supports the offer by BHE and has declined to renegotiate the terms. **[Customer]** appeals this decision, seeking instead to pay \$300 before resuming the broken arrangement.

III. Discussion and Decision

We find the original payment arrangement and the decision by CAD not to change its terms to be reasonable. Although we recognize **[customer's]** difficult circumstances, the monthly payment schedule and the offer by BHE to reinstate the arrangement are both fair and justifiable given the account balance and payment history in this case.

The findings of CAD in this case were reasonable. Therefore, we uphold CAD's May 19, 2000 decision and decline to investigate this matter further.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 20th day of June, 2000.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
 Nugent
 Diamond

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 30 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 73, et seq.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.